



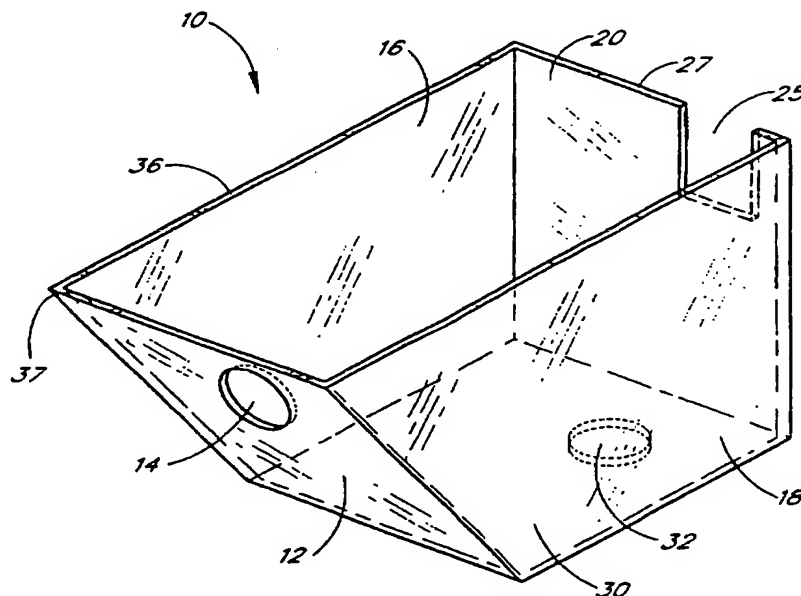
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(54) Title: REMOVABLE INSERT FOR COIN TRAYS

(57) Abstract

A removable insert (10) for the coin tray (37) of a video poker or keno or slot machine (35) includes an opening (32) so that coins dispensed from the machine (35) fall through the opening (32) and into the coin tray (37). The insert (10) protects the coin tray (37) from dust and dirt and also allows customers to conveniently carry their own plastic insert (10) and coins from one machine (35) to another.



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REMOVABLE INSERT FOR COIN TRAYS

Background of the Invention

Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to removable inserts which are placed inside coin trays in gaming equipment. Specifically, the present invention relates to removable plastic inserts for use in coin trays of video poker and keno machines and slot machines.

10 Description of the Related Art

 Video poker machines, keno machines and slot machines are very popular methods of gaming. As is known, a customer inserts nickels, quarters, half dollars, or dollars into these machines as part of the game. If the customer wins, a designated number of coins are dispensed into a metal coin tray usually located near
15 the front of the machine adjacent to the customer. These coin trays are specifically made of metal so that the sound of winning will resonate through the casino, thereby enticing more customers to play the machines.

 During a typical series of games played with one of these machines, the customer opens a roll of coins and places them within a plastic cup often provided
20 by the casino. The customer usually attempts to place the plastic cup on a top flat surface of the machine during play. The customer inserts coins from the plastic cup into the machine and begins to play. The customer then removes coins from the metal coin tray as they collect, placing them back into their plastic cup. When the customer decides to move to a different machine, all of the coins are removed from
25 the metal coin tray and placed in the plastic cup provided by the casino. The customer then moves to the next machine and continues to play.

 Unfortunately, as these machines are used throughout the day and night, the metal coin trays becomes dirty as oil, moisture and residue from numerous customer's hands and fingers are deposited into the coin tray as coins are continually
30 discharged and removed. In addition, it is cumbersome for the customer to remove collected coins from the coin tray and place them into a plastic cup. Moreover, the design and shape of the machine may not provide a sufficient or conveniently exposed flat surface for holding the plastic cup. A need therefore exists for a device

which can shield the metal coin tray from accumulating residue and debris by repeated contact with discharged coins and numerous customers while also providing a convenient means for storing collected coins and for carrying coins removed from one machine to different machines or elsewhere.

5

Summary of the Invention

In a first embodiment, the present invention is a removable insert for use with video gaming machines having a generally horizontal top surface for the video display tube and the user play selection buttons, etc., and which have a coin tray recessed in and accessible from the generally horizontal surface of the gaming machine. Typical gaming machines of this type are video poker and keno machines. The removable insert of the present invention is specifically designed to fit within the coin tray of such a video gaming machine without impeding the flow of coins into the tray. In a second embodiment, the removable insert is designed in size and shape to fit into the coin payout tray of a slot machine. The slot machine may be a traditional mechanical machine or a newer video slot machine.

In the broadest embodiment, the present invention comprises a removable insert for use in the coin tray of a gaming machine. The removable insert includes a forward wall angled to overlay the front section of the coin tray. Attached to the forward wall are a pair of substantially parallel sides designed to overlay the side sections of the coin tray within the machine. A rear wall is attached perpendicularly to the parallel sides and opposite the forward wall. For video poker machines, the rear wall includes a cutout notch which allows passage of coins dispensed from the machine into the removable insert. A bottom panel is attached below and perpendicular to the forward wall, parallel sides and rear wall and is shaped to conform with the lower portion of the coin tray.

In an additional embodiment of the invention, the bottom panel includes a cutout so that coins dispensed from the gaming machine into the removable insert make contact with the metal coin tray via the cutout before resting in the removable insert cavity. This results in a pleasing metal-on-metal noise as the gaming machine is dispensing coins.

In yet another embodiment, the forward angled wall includes a finger hole which may be grasped by a customer's finger to assist in easily removing the insert

from within the coin tray of the gaming machine. In another embodiment, the upper side or front edge of the tray is provided with one or more lips, ridges or handles which the customer may grasp to assist in removing the insert from the coin tray. Preferably, the removable insert is made of a lightweight durable plastic. It is anticipated that casinos will give these inserts away to customers as an enticement to play in their casino. Also, casinos can advertise themselves or upcoming events on the sides of these inserts.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of the removable insert of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a top view of a preferred embodiment of the removable insert of the present invention;

Fig. 3 is a side view of a preferred embodiment of the removable insert of the present invention;

Fig. 4 is a front view of a preferred embodiment of the removable insert of the present invention showing details of the finger hole;

Fig. 5 is a rear view of a preferred embodiment of the removable insert of the present invention showing details of the notch which allows dispensed coins to travel into the insert;

Fig. 6 is a perspective view of the removable insert of the present invention illustrating its mounting within a video poker machine;

Fig. 7 is a cross-sectional side view of the removable insert of the present invention taken along line 7-7 of Fig. 6 showing mounting within a video poker machine;

Fig. 8 is a partial cross-sectional view of a portion of the video poker machine shown in Fig. 7 and the removable insert of the present invention; and

Fig. 9 is a perspective view of another embodiment of a removable insert of the invention for use in the coin tray of a slot machine.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment

In the most preferred embodiment, the present invention is a lightweight, durable plastic removable insert which can be placed within the coin tray of the

gaming machine. In use, a customer places the removable insert of the present invention within the coin tray of a gaming machine before beginning to play. As coins are discharged into the coin tray, they collect within the removable insert. Once the customer has completed playing, the insert can be removed along with the customer's collected coins and taken to the next machine. In this manner, the customer does not need to continually remove coins from the coin tray and place them into a plastic cup or other type of coin container.

By using a removable insert, customers can easily transport coins from one machine to another without having to continually place their hands into dirty coin trays. This prevents a customer's fingers from contacting residue or debris in a tray that may accumulate as many games are played. In addition, casinos and other organizations with gaming equipment can promote themselves by giving these removable inserts away to customers while having the casino name or logo or other type of advertising on each insert.

The first embodiment of the present invention is a removable insert which can be placed within the coin tray of a video gaming machine having a generally horizontal display and play selector surface. Referring to Fig. 1, a perspective view of the removable insert 10 is shown. The removable insert 10 includes an angled forward wall or plate 12 which slopes outwardly from the bottom edge to the top edge to conform with the front section of a video poker machine coin tray. A finger hole 14 is included in the upper portion of the forward angled wall 12 to assist the customer in removing the insert 10 from the coin tray. Although the finger hole 14 can be of various sizes and shapes, the most preferable finger hole is a circular shape of approximately one inch in diameter. Of course, it is well known that other shapes and sizes of fingers holes could be placed in the forward wall 12 to provide the same features. Similarly, other components such as handles, ridges, rims, notches, lips, or inserts may be used, preferably on or near the upper edge 37 of forward plate 12 to assist the customer in grasping and lifting the insert for removal.

Attached to the forward wall 12 are two opposite side walls or plates 16 and 18 which extend between the forward wall 12 and rear wall 20. The sides 16 and 18 are preferably perpendicular or normal to the forward and rear walls and are designed so that they preferably fit precisely within the side sections of the coin tray in a video poker machine. As seen in Fig. 1, the rear wall 20 is attached

perpendicular to the sides 16 and 18. The rear wall 20 is designed to preferably fit precisely against the rear portion of the coin tray in a video gaming machine. As shown, the forward, side and back panels have top or upper edges which define an open top through which the user may readily remove coins by hand. The forward wall is preferably at least slightly slanted obtusely from vertical, or from the plane of rear wall 20, to provide an open top 16 having an enlarged opening area as compared to the area of the bottom 30 of the device. The upper or top edges 37, 38 and 27 of the forward, side and rear plates, respectively, are also preferably coplanar, as shown.

10 The rear wall 20 additionally comprises a rectangular notch 25 expending downwardly from a top 27 edge of the rear wall 20. Coins are allowed to pass from the video gaming machine through the notch 25 into the removable insert 10. As can be imagined, a slot in the video poker machine will dispense coins through the notch 25 and into the removable insert 10 when a customer wins at the game. Although the notch 25 is most preferably rectangular, other shapes which allow dispensed coins from the video poker machine into the removable insert 10 are contemplated.

20 Attached to the bottom of the forward wall 12, sides 16 and 18, and rear wall 20 is a bottom plate or panel 30 which completes the open top box-like shape of the removable insert 10. The bottom 30 is also designed to preferably precisely overlay the lower portion of a coin tray of a video gaming machine. In addition, preferably an opening 32 is located within the bottom 30 and positioned so that coins dispensed from the machine through the notch 25 will land within the opening 32. The opening 32 is a through-hole such that the metal coin tray is exposed below the bottom 30. Because customers enjoy hearing the sound of coins dropping against the metal coin tray, the opening 32 is sized to permit coins dispensed through notch 25 to hit the metal coin tray exposed below the opening 32. However, the diameter of the opening 32 is smaller than the diameter of the coins dispensed by the particular machine, whereby the coins themselves will not fall through the opening once the removable insert 10 is removed from the machine. Thus, the removable insert 10 can still be used to transport coins from one video poker machine to another without falling through the opening 32.

The shape and size of removable insert 10 can be tailored for a particular video gaming machine within the scope of the invention. For example, the angle or slant of forward wall 12 relative to vertical or rear wall 20 may be modified in alternative embodiments of the present invention. Moreover, the forward, side and/or rear walls need not be flat but may have more rounded or bowed surfaces and shapes, so long as the overall shape and size of the device does not prevent it from fitting or nesting within the coin tray, and from being easily inserted and removed from the access opening to the coin tray on the machine. In addition, a lip or small handle may be provided on or near to the top edge of each wall so that the removable insert 10 can be pulled out of the coin tray without using a finger hole. For example, a small notch may be placed on the inside of forward wall 12 so that a customer's finger could lift up on the notch thereby pulling the removable insert from within the coin tray of a video poker machine.

Referring now to Fig. 2, a top view of the preferred embodiment of the present invention is shown. As can be seen more clearly, the finger hole 14 is a circular opening at the upper portion of the forward wall 12 and provides a means for lifting the removable insert 10 from a metal coin tray in a video poker machine. It can be appreciated that several alternative embodiments of a means for lifting the removable insert 10 from the coin tray are possible.

Also shown more clearly in reference to Fig. 2 is the opening 32 which allows discharged coins to strike the metal coin tray and emanate a pleasing sound to the customer. As discussed above, the opening 32 is designed to have a diameter which is slightly smaller than the diameter of the coin discharged from the machine and thus prevents passage of the coin from the bottom. Additionally, the opening 32 is positioned in the bottom 30 so that discharged coins will first pass through the opening 32, striking the coin tray, and then come to rest in the removable insert 10.

Although the opening 32 is shown as circular, other shapes may be used. For example, an oblong or square opening would also to allow discharged coins to first strike the metal coin tray prior to coming to rest within the removable insert 10. Further, the position of the opening 32 can be adjusted for various video gaming machines, such that individual removable inserts might be used with different brands of video poker machines or different types of video gaming machines.

Referring to Fig. 3, the angled forward wall 12 can be seen to lean forward and away from the rear wall 20. As shown, the forward wall 12 attaches to the bottom 30 at an angle of approximately 120 degrees. It should be noted, that the exact angle created by the forward wall 12 and bottom 30 depends on the conformation of the coin tray within the machine. The slant of the forward wall 12 is designed so that it rests against the front section of the video poker machine's coin tray.

As seen from the front (Fig. 4), the finger hole 14 appears as a through hole in the forward wall 12. The sides 16 and 18 are aligned perpendicular to the bottom 30. As shown in reference to Fig. 5, the rear wall 20 is also aligned perpendicular to the bottom 30.

The notch 25 appears slightly offset from center at the top 27 of the rear wall 20. As shown in this preferred embodiment, the notch 25 comprises a rectangular through hole through the rear wall 20 and allows dispensed coins from the video poker machine to drop into the removable insert 10. Although the notch 25 is shown offset from center in the preferred embodiment, other positions of the notch 25 are contemplated. For example, a video poker machine with a centrally located coin dispenser might have a notch positioned in the center of the rear wall 20. Further, other shapes of the notch 25 could be designed to function similarly and allow dispensed coins from the video poker machine to travel into the removable insert 10.

Referring to Fig. 6, the removable insert 10 is shown mounting into a video poker machine 35. The video poker machine 35 includes a coin tray 37 for receiving dispensed coins. In practice, the removable insert 10 is placed within the coin tray 37 such that the forward wall 12 becomes aligned with the front section of the coin tray 37.

As can be seen in Fig. 7, when the device is installed in the coin tray the removable insert 10 maybe angled forward such that the rear wall 20 first slides under a lip 40 which overhangs the coin tray 37 and so that the rear wall 20 is placed within the coin tray 37. The customer then presses the forward wall 12 of the removable insert 10 against the front section 42 of the coin tray 37 and the bottom 30 of the removable insert 10 contacts the lower portion 44 of the coin tray 37. As the removable insert 10 is further pressed into the coin tray 37 and under

the lip 40, the rear wall 20 aligns with the back portion 46 of the coin tray and within the coin tray of the video poker machine 35.

Referring to Fig. 8, a detailed view of the removable insert 10 while mounted inside the coin tray 37 can be seen. The forward wall 12 overlays the front section 42 of the coin tray. As described above, the forward wall 12 is designed to slant forward at an angle so that preferably no gaps are formed between the forward wall 12 and the front section 42 of the coin tray 37.

Similarly, the rear wall 20 of the removable insert 10 is designed so that it abuts the back 46 of the coin tray 37. The rear wall 20 fits under the overhang 40 of the video poker machine 35. It can also be seen that the bottom 30 of the removable insert 10 rests above the lower portion 44 of the coin tray 37 and supports the removable insert 10 while it is housed inside the video poker machine 35. Thus, the insert, when fully positioned in the coin tray is preferably in substantial nesting engagement with the interior coin tray cavity walls.

Although the upper surface of the video poker machine shown in Figs. 6-8 includes a slanted portion, other well known machines have a top surface that extends generally along a single plane, typically horizontal, except for the video tube and the play and card selection buttons. Such generally flat top machines are often mounted on or in a flat counter or bar surface for convenient user access.

In Fig. 9 there is illustrated another embodiment for a removable insert of the invention suitable for slot machines and similar types of gaming machines having an elongated coin tray for receiving payouts at the front of the machine. Such machines may be conventional slot machines having a lever or handle to be pulled by the customer during play of the machine or newer slot machines of the video-type which may not include a handle or lever to be pulled by the customer, but are operated automatically after the customer inserts the proper amount of coins, or presses a lever or other actuation means, etc. Slot machines are generally upright cabinets having a payout or coin tray into which the coins are dispensed. The coin tray is generally relatively wide, extending substantially along the width of the front of the machine, and in which the coins are dispensed downwardly into the open top of the coin tray. A portion of the coin tray extends into the machine for receiving the coins, and a portion of the tray is exposed at the front of the machine cabinet

for convenient customer access to the coins in the coin tray. Such machines are well known in the gaming industry and need not be further described.

Fig. 9 illustrates the removable plastic insert device 50 for use in such a gaming machine of the slot machine type. The insert device includes a front wall 52, side walls 56 and 58, a back wall 54 and a bottom. The device is open at the top. The upper edge 51 of the front, sides and rear walls are preferably coplanar as illustrated. The front wall 52 is also preferably slanted forward somewhat relative to the back wall 54 similar to the slant of front wall 12 relative to the back wall 20 in the device shown in Fig. 1. Such a shape conforms better for nesting engagement of the device within the coin tray of the slot machine which generally has a similar slant on the front wall of the coin payout tray. Preferably the size and shape of the removable insert conforms generally to, and more preferably specifically to, the size and shape of the interior walls of the coin payout tray of the gaming machine. By having such a size and shape, the device will nestingly fit within the coin payout tray with the front, back and side walls overlying and preferably slightly abutting the walls, as well as the bottom of the coin payout tray. With such a size and shape the device may be easily inserted into the coin tray and easily removed and avoiding the problem of having to force an oversized device into the coin tray, where it could become jammed or forced against the coin tray walls and removed with substantially more difficulty. The specific height of the sides, shape and size of the top opening and bottom panel may be made to accommodate any type or model of slot machine coin payout tray. The device is also preferably formed to have one or more handle members, preferably in the form of tabs, ridges, flanges or the like, either formed along the interior side or front panel surfaces, and preferably at or adjacent to the upper edge of the side or front panels. More preferably, the handle members are formed along or adjacent to the upper edge of the side walls as illustrated in Fig. 9 whereby the operator can conveniently grasp the handle members between a thumb and forefinger, which will assist in holding and balancing the removable insert when removing it from the coin tray, especially important where there are substantial number of coins within the insert. Alternatively, the handle members may comprise one or more finger holes along either the front or side walls, similar to the design illustrated in Fig. 1 to assist in removing the insert from the coin tray. The typical size of a removable insert for

slot machines as illustrated in Fig. 9 is a width along the front wall 52 of approximately 18 ± 2 ", and the width of the side walls of about 8 ± 1 ".

5 The composition of which the removable insert device of the invention is made is a synthetic resin, preferably a moldable plastic such as polystyrene, polyethylene, polypropylene, polynitrile, polycarbonate, polyurethane, or copolymers or terpolymers of such materials, or any other suitable plastic which can be readily and inexpensively formed or molded to the desired shape.

10 While one preferred embodiment of the present invention has been exemplified in the above description of a removable insert, alternative embodiments which do not depart from the spirit of the invention are also contemplated. The breath of the present invention should not be limited to the above description, but rather, should be interpreted from the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A removable insert device for use with a video gaming machine having a coin tray for receiving dispensed coins, said removable insert device comprising:

- 5 a forward wall angled to overlay a front section of said coin tray;
 a pair of sides mounted perpendicularly to said forward wall and
 designed to overlay the side sections of said coin tray;
 a rear wall attached perpendicularly to said sides and opposite said
 front wall, said rear wall having a cutout notch therein for the passage of
10 coins dispensed from said video gaming machine;
 a bottom wall attached along the bottom of said forward wall, parallel
 sides and rear wall and shaped to rest above the lower portion of said coin
 tray; and
 said forward wall, side walls and rear wall defining an open top along
15 the upper respective edges thereof.

2. The removable insert device of Claim 1 wherein said forward wall includes a component formed therein or extending therefrom for assisting in removing said device from a coin tray.

3. The removable insert device of Claim 2, wherein said forward wall
20 component comprises a finger hole therein for assisting in removing said removable
 insert from the coin tray.

4. The removable insert device of Claim 1 wherein said bottom includes
 an opening therein positioned so that coins dispensed from said video poker machine
 land within said opening.

25 5. The removable insert device of Claim 1 wherein said removable insert
 comprises a moldable synthetic resin.

6. The removable insert of Claim 1 wherein said cutout notch is
 rectangular.

7. The removable insert device of Claim 1 wherein said bottom wall,
30 side walls, back wall and forward wall are substantially flat.

8. The removable insert device of Claim 1 wherein the upper edges of
 said forward wall, side walls and rear wall are coplanar.

9. The removable insert device of Claim 1 wherein said forward wall is angled obtusely relative to said rear wall, whereby the area of the opening of said open top is greater than the area of said bottom wall.

5 10. In combination, a video gaming machine having a generally horizontal display and play selection surface having a coin tray recessed therein and a removable insert device of Claim 1 positioned in said coin tray for receiving coins dispensed by said machine.

10 11. In combination, a video gaming machine having a generally horizontal display and play selection surface having a coin tray recessed therein and a removable insert device of Claim 9 positioned in said coin tray for receiving coins dispensed by said machine.

12. A removable insert device for use with a video gaming machine having a coin tray for receiving dispensed coins, said device comprising:

15 a forward wall angled to overlay a front section of said coin tray, said forward wall including a finger hole for assisting in removing said device from said coin tray;

a pair of substantially parallel sides mounted perpendicularly to said forward wall and designed to overlay side sections of said coin tray;

20 a rear wall attached perpendicularly to said parallel sides and opposite said front wall, said rear wall having a cutout notch therein for allowing passage of coins from said machine into said protective insert;

25 a bottom attached below and perpendicular to said forward wall, parallel sides and rear wall and shaped to rest above the lower portion of said coin tray, wherein said bottom includes an opening so that coins dispensed from said machine contact said coin tray through said opening and without passing therethrough.

13. The removable insert of Claim 12 wherein said removable insert is made of a moldable synthetic resin.

30 14. The removable insert of Claim 12 wherein said cutout notch is rectangular.

15. The removable insert device of Claim 12 wherein said bottom wall, side walls, back wall and forward wall are substantially flat.

16. The removable insert device of Claim 15 wherein the upper edges of said forward wall, side walls and rear wall are coplanar.

17. The removable insert device of Claim 16 wherein said forward wall is angled obtusely relative to said rear wall, whereby the area of the opening of said open top is greater than the area of said bottom wall.

18. In combination, a video gaming machine having a generally horizontal display and play selection surface having a coin tray recessed therein and a removable insert device of Claim 12 positioned in said coin tray for receiving coins dispensed by said machine.

19. In combination, a video gaming machine having a generally horizontal display and play selection surface having a coin tray recessed therein and a removable insert device of Claim 17 positioned in said coin tray for receiving coins dispensed by said machine.

20. A removable insert device for use with a gaming machine having a coin tray for receiving dispensed coins, said removable insert device comprising:

a forward wall angled to overlay a front section of said coin tray;

a pair of side walls mounted perpendicularly to said forward wall and designed to overlay the side sections of said coin tray;

a rear wall attached perpendicularly to said side walls and opposite said front wall;

a bottom wall attached along the bottom of said forward wall, parallel side walls and rear wall and shaped to rest about the lower portion of said coin tray;

said forward wall, side walls and rear wall defining an open top along the upper respective edges thereof; and

a component formed therein along one or more of said walls or extending therefrom for assisting in removing said device from a coin tray.

21. The removable insert device of Claim 20, wherein said forward wall component comprises a finger hold therein for assisting in removing said removable insert from the coin tray.

22. The removable insert device of Claim 20, wherein said bottom includes an opening therein positioned so that coins dispensed from said machine land within said opening.

23. The removable insert device of Claim 20 wherein said side walls have a handle member formed thereon.

24. The removable insert device of Claim 23 wherein said handle member comprises a ridge formed along or adjacent to the upper edge of said side walls.

5 25. A gaming machine having a coin payout tray for receiving coins dispensed from said machine, said coin payout tray being exposed to the exterior of said machine whereby a user may remove coins directly from said payout tray, and a removable plastic insert of Claim 20 received in nesting engagement with said coin payout tray.

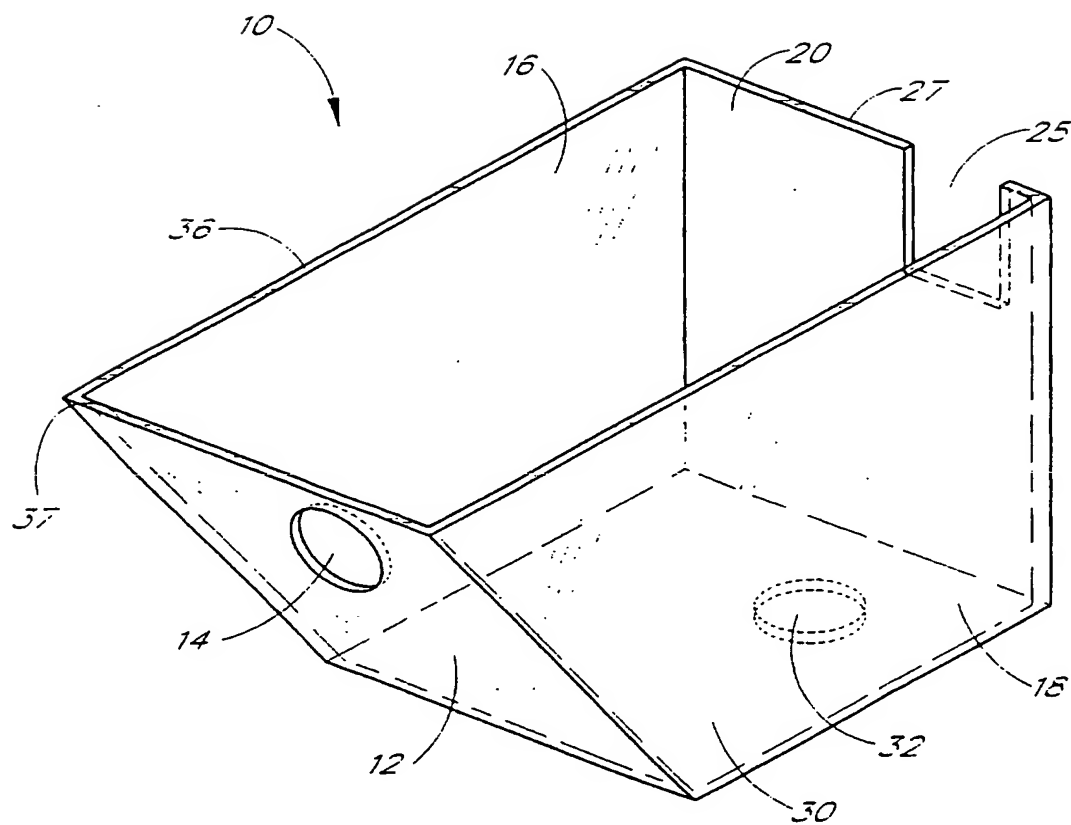
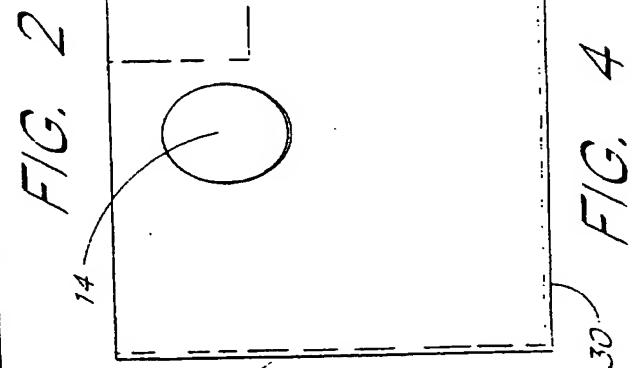
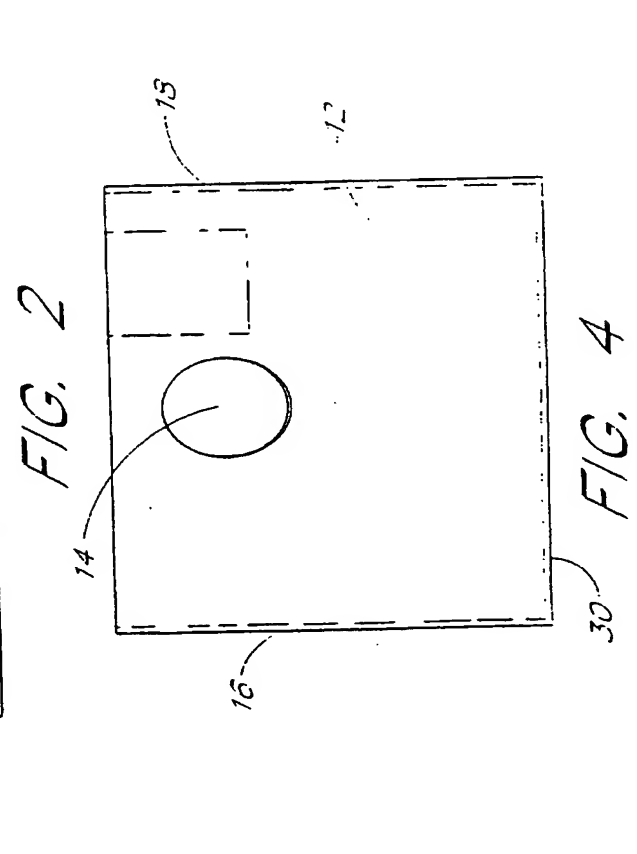
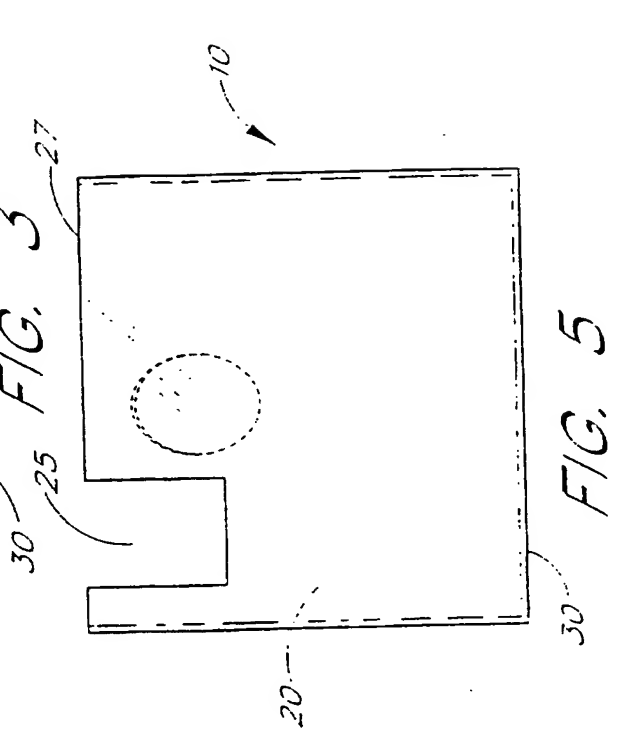
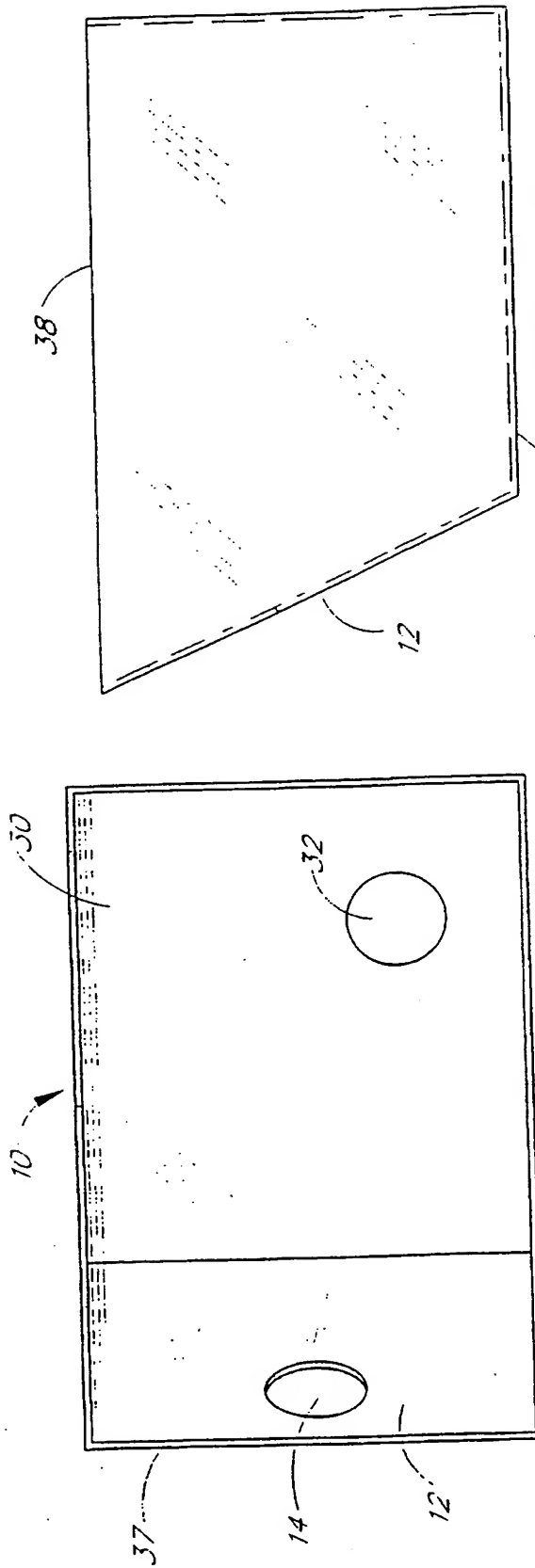


FIG. 1



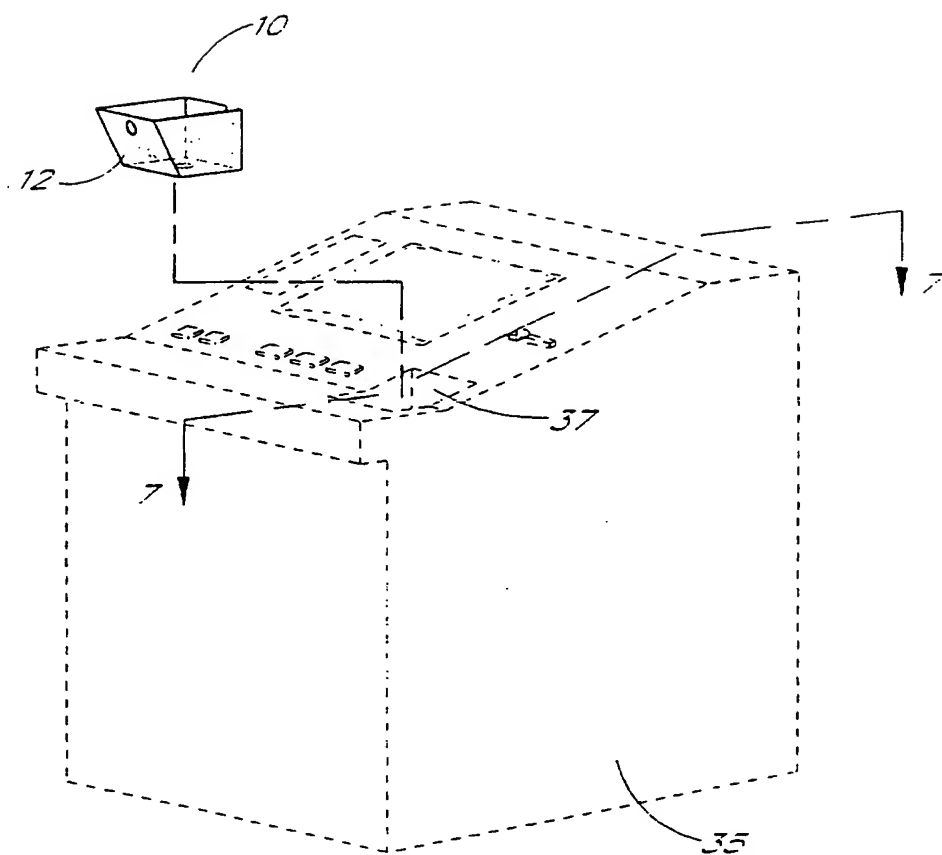


FIG. 6

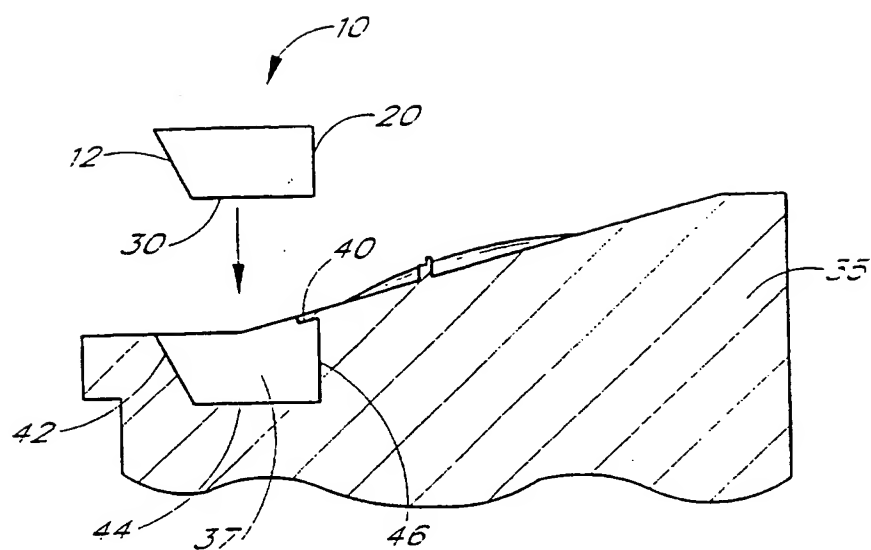


FIG. 7

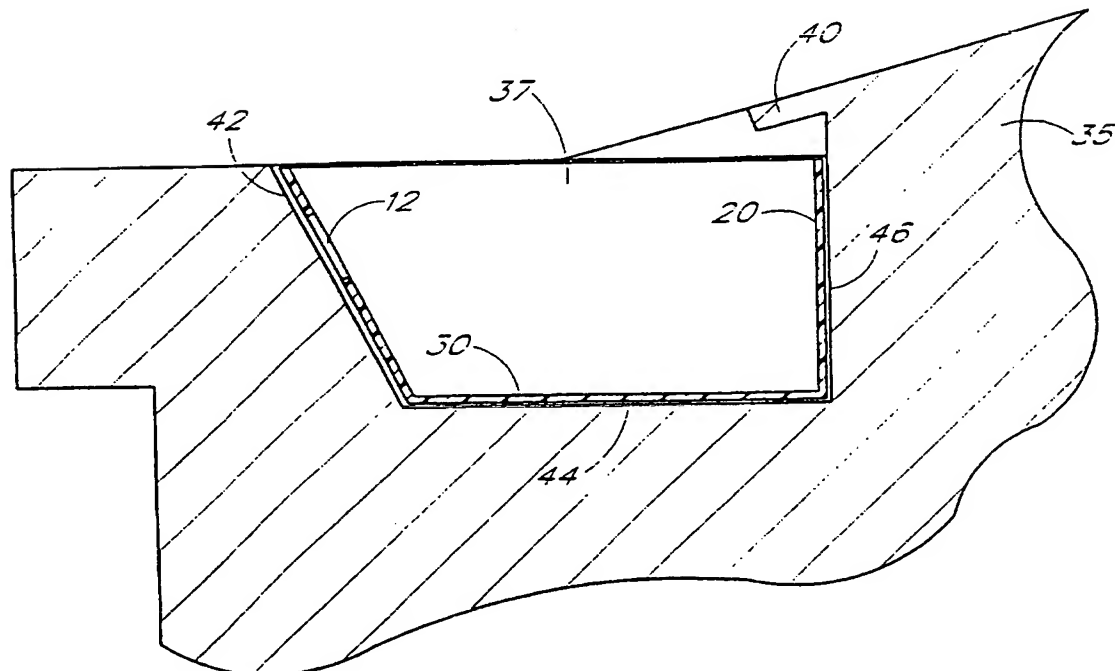


FIG. 8

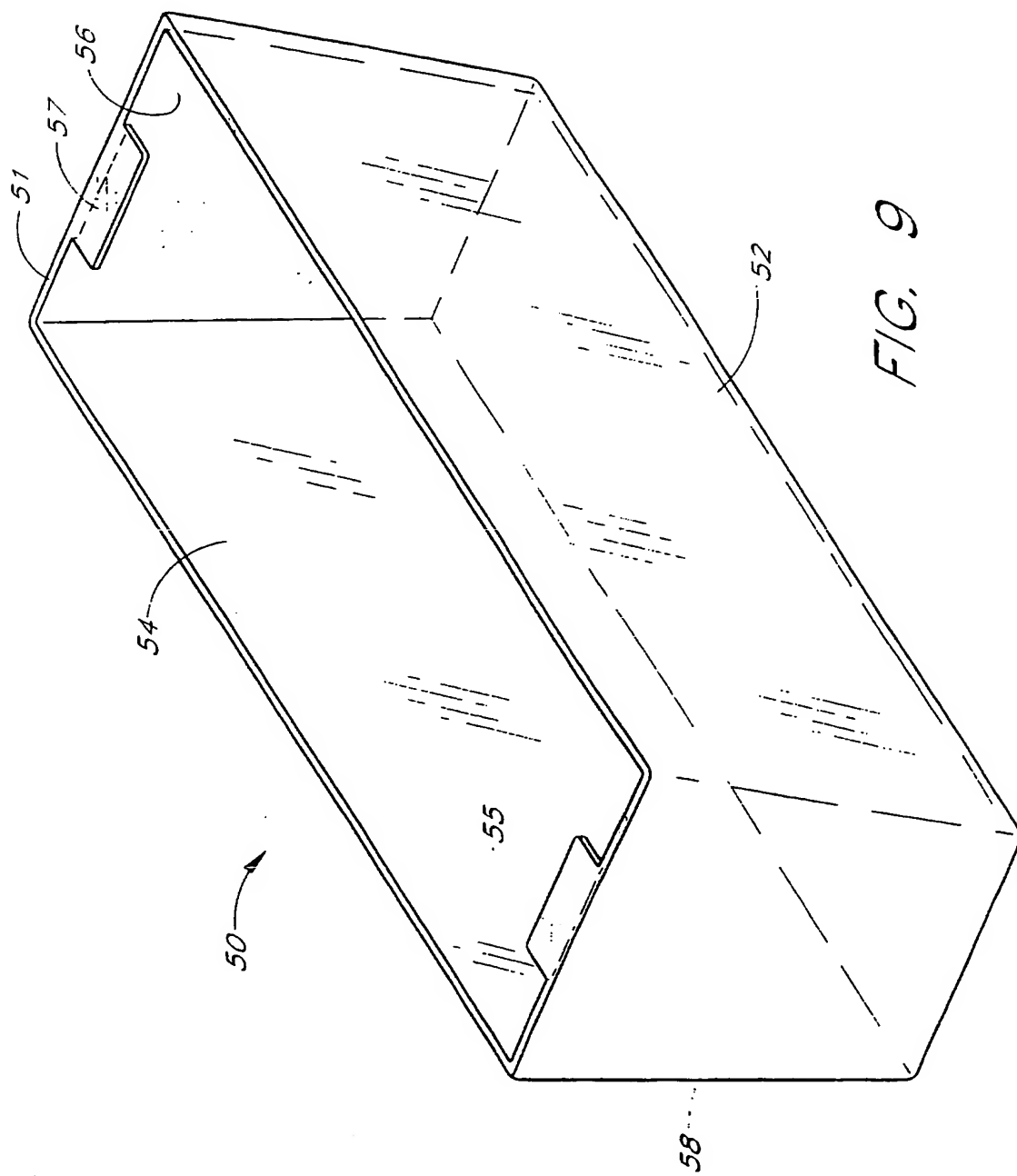


FIG. 9

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US97/14653

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(6) :B65G 11/04

US CL :232/55

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 232/55, 1D, 12, 15, 43.2; 463/25; 220/608, 770; 206/518

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US, A, 5,467,858 (KOVENS ET AL) 21 November 1995 (21/11/95), see entire document.	1-9,12-17,20-24
A	US, A, 5,386,903 (ROTHSCHILD ET AL.) 07 February 1995 (07/02/1995), coulumn 3, lines 46-55.	10,11,18,19,25

☐

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☐

See patent family annex.

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